

# Baram dam no cause for alarm

## Project still under study and long way to go, deputy minister tells local folk

By CALVIN YEO  
yeop@thestar.com.my

**KUCHING:** The people in Baram should not be unduly alarmed by the proposed construction of the RM4bil Baram hydroelectric dam project.

Calling the issue "pre-mature" as the study has yet to be completed, Baram MP Datuk Jacob Dungau Sagan said the Opposition was just harping on it for its own political

purpose.

"It is still a long way to go. So, the people should not be alarmed by it," he said after attending the International Trade and Industry Ministry (MITI) Day at Universiti Malaysia Sarawak (Unimas) here yesterday.

He said the people had to understand that the building of the dam was a development agenda by the government to further develop the state.

"We want to tap the full potential of our rivers in producing power as it is environmentally-safe source of energy.

"Through this, we can provide cheap electricity while encouraging more foreign direct investment into the state," he said.

Recently, about 450 villagers from Baram held a peaceful demonstration in Long Lama to show their displeasure at some of their community leaders for supporting the proposed

dam.

Jacob, who is International Trade and Industry deputy minister, said the issue would not affect his chances of defending the constituency in the coming general election.

"The Barisan Nasional has been engaging with the people and they understand better that the government policies are meant to improve their livelihood," he said.

Jacob was re-elected for his fourth term as Baram MP in the 2008 elec-

tions when he won the seat with 4,044-vote majority.

He quashed talks that the internal bickering within the SPDP would affect his chances of defending the seat.

"There is always internal bickering in any parties.

"But I believe when it comes to elections, everyone will come together to face our common enemy," said Jacob, who is the party's senior vice-president.